

Child Fatality Summary C-19 2014

Child's Name: Trysten Adams

County: St. Lucie

Date of Birth: 7/24/2012

Date of Death: 9/28/2014

Family Composition Chart

Report Number: 2014-257629

Name	Age at Time of the Incident	Relationship with Deceased Child
Adams, Trysten	2	Decedent
	0	Sibling
	6	Sibling
Beer, Michael	47	Foster father
Beer, Michelle	40	Foster mother

1. Circumstances Surrounding Death

On 9/29/14 a report was received alleging Trysten was found unresponsive in his foster family's home on 9/28/14 and pronounced dead that same day. It was suspected that the infection Trysten had been to the pediatrician for previously affected his heart and subsequently caused his death. However, an additional and supplemental report was received on 10/1/14 when it was discovered at Trysten's autopsy that he had severe internal injuries which likely was the cause of his death.

At the time of the incident Trysten was residing with his foster parents, two biological siblings, and the biological daughter of the foster parents, age 9. On the morning of the incident the foster father took the two older children to church while the foster mother stayed home with Trysten and his younger sibling. The parents denied Trysten acting any differently on the day of his death. Trysten and his younger sibling were both put down for a nap around 1:00 PM at which point shortly afterwards the foster mother took the two older children to run errands. The foster father reported Trysten's younger sibling woke up around 2:00 PM so he went into his room where the sibling's crib was and noticed he needed a diaper change. He picked Trysten's sibling up and went into Trysten's room where a changing table was. The foster father reported when he walked in Trysten was on the floor "whimpering" so he told him he could get up and go into the living room. However, after he was through changing Trysten's sibling's diaper he looked at Trysten again who was still on the floor and noted his lips appeared discolored and his eyes were "glossed" over. He reported he called 911 who told him not to perform CPR if Trysten appeared to be breathing which the foster father believed he was. He took Trysten to the front yard at which point the foster mother arrived home and began CPR. Trysten was transported to Tradition Hospital and despite diligent efforts to revive him, Trysten was pronounced dead at 5:02 PM.

Both foster parents had advised that prior to his death, they had taken Trysten to the doctor due to him biting his lips and later discovering blisters on his tongue and lips. He was given Amoxicillin and advised it could be an infection and if the blisters don't go away within 7-10 days to return to the doctor. Because Trysten appeared to have been fighting some type of infection, it was initially believed this is what caused his death.

An autopsy was performed on Trysten on September 30, 2014 by the Medical Examiner Department-District 19. The Medical Examiner noted severe lacerations to Trysten's liver to the point where it was almost severed in half; as well as bruising to his kidneys, gallbladder, lungs, and rib cage. At the time of this report the final report was not completed however a verbal was provided with the cause of death "blunt force trauma" and the manner a "homicide." The Medical Examiner concluded that due to the severity of Trysten's injuries, he would have died between 15-30 minutes after impact, placing the foster father the only suspect since he was the only one in the home with Trysten when he became unresponsive.

The Child Protection Team completed a medical consult on Trysten and his siblings however at the time this report was written their final report had not been completed so their findings are unknown.

Port. St. Lucie Police Department has jurisdiction over this case. Detectives Butterworth and D'Angelo are the lead investigators and the case number is 201419499. Once a verbal was received from the Medical Examiner that not only were they ruling the manner of death a "homicide," but the injury was so great that the child would have died within 15-30 minutes after impact, the foster father was arrested on 10/1/14 and charged with Homicide-murder while engaged in certain felony offense as well as Cruelty towards child-aggravated child abuse. The foster father remains incarcerated until further court proceedings. The final police report was not yet completed at the time this report was written.

Based on the information indicated above, the report was closed with "verified" findings for death, physical injury, and internal injury with the foster father, Mr. Beer, as the "caregiver responsible." Per the Medical Examiner the manner of death is a "homicide" as Trysten had severe internal injuries that ultimately caused his death and could only have been caused by blunt force trauma. Since the trauma was so great that Trysten would have bled out within 15-30 minutes of receiving the injuries, the foster father was the only adult home at the time and thus the only one who could have caused these injuries.

Since the report was initially called in with the belief that Trysten possibly died from a medical issue, the maltreatment of inadequate supervision was added to the case. This was closed with "no indicators" as there is no evidence to support this allegation since the foster father was with Trysten at the time of his death.

2. Other Children in the Family

At the time of his death, Trysten had two siblings, ages 10 months and 6, that were residing with him in the foster home. Additionally, the foster parents had a biological daughter, age 9, that also resided in the home. Upon learning from the Medical Examiner that their preliminary ruling will be a homicide, all three children were removed from the foster home. However, upon learning the foster father was culpable and the foster mother couldn't have known the foster father had a propensity for such violence, their biological child was returned to the foster mother. Trysten's biological siblings remain in foster care and under protective supervision.

Summary of Prior Agency Involvement with Family

a. Within 12 months of the child's death during the following time period:

No prior reports were located on the Beer Foster Home during this time period.

Three prior reports were located on Trysten and his biological family within this time period. The most recent report came in June 2014 and was closed with "not substantiated" findings for family violence and substance misuse. Trysten's mother was the alleged perpetrator and Trysten's minor uncle the alleged victim. At the time this report came in Trysten and his siblings were in foster care. It is unknown if services were offered however at the time of case closure the mother went into residential treatment. Another report came in on the family in 2014 and was closed as "no jurisdiction" as the alleged perpetrator (Trysten's father) did not live in the home nor was he a caregiver to the alleged victim, who was the same minor uncle mentioned earlier. Lastly a report came in November 2013 and was closed with "verified" findings for substance misuse and threatened harm. The mother was the perpetrator and Trysten and his siblings the victims. Trysten and his older sibling were placed with the maternal grandmother and Trysten's youngest sibling was placed in foster care. The family began receiving services through the protective supervision case. No other reports were received on this family during this time frame.

b. All other investigations and services during the following time period:

A report in 2013 was closed with "not substantiated" findings for family violence and substance misuse and "no indicators" for medical neglect and inadequate supervision. The mother was the alleged perpetrator and Trysten and his siblings the alleged perpetrator. At the time of case closure the mother was receiving substance abuse treatment as well as mental health treatment [REDACTED]. The family was also referred to "Family Group Conferencing" however at the time the report was closed it was unknown if the family engaged [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

Content

[REDACTED]

Only one report was located on the Beer family; however is extremely significant. In 1993 while Mr. Beer was involved with another woman who had a two year old child, a report was called into the Hotline alleging this child presented to the daycare with numerous injuries, some more serious than others, that did not appear consistent with Mr. Beer's paramour's explanations. The two year old child was seen at the Child Protection Team who believed their findings were consistent with physical abuse of the child.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] No arrests were ever made however the final police report has not been received therefore it is unknown why.

No other prior reports were located on the Beer family nor Trysten's family.

Signature Page:

Rebecca Thomann
Rebecca Thomann, Child Fatality Prevention Specialist

12-17-14
Date

Frank Perry
Frank Perry, Quality Assurance Manager

10/17/14
Date

Mark Holsapfel
Mark Holsapfel, SER Family Safety Program Manager

1/5/15
Date

Dennis Miles
Dennis Miles, Regional Managing Director

1-13-15
Date